From: Chris Carman
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/28/02 5:06pm
Subject: reasons against the settlement

I know I might be sending this a bit late, but I just found out about the
open comment period and I'd like to say a couple things from an educator's
point of view.

I teach two computer classes - one in web site design and programming, the
other in computer & network support (aimed at CompTIA's A+ and Network+
tests). Our high school uses Windows PC's almost exclusively because of a
directive from our school board that has more or less banned Macs due to
their lack of presence in most businesses. I primarily use Macs at home,
but I also have 3 PC's and am very comfortable with the Windows and Linux
operating systems (I'm A+, Network+ and Linux+ certified).

The settlement is bad for consumers, educators, students and the country
as a whole for two major reasons.

The first reason is that educators and students would have very little say
in what products are chosen to be placed in their classrooms. Deep
discounts from Microsoft and used PC heardware not only limits choices,
but also increases tech support costs for the school. I did an
observation at an inner-city high school in Cincinnati when I was in
college, and five brand-new PC's sat in a corner because kids had stolen
the balls from inside the mice and they were rendered useless. Of course,
a $2 mouse ball would have fixed this, but with very little tech support
in that district, the technology is wasted. If you want to do anything
with schools, give them some money for equipment but give a lot more money
for tech support training and increased salaries for tech coordinators to
attract more qualified individuals.

The second, and most important reason, is that the settlement does
absolutely nothing to curb Microsoft's future domineering behavior. In
fact, they come out looking like the good guys by donating to impoverished
schools while increasing their installed user base! This sort of thing
cannot be allowed to happen.

The Windows APIs that allow programs to run inside the Windows Operating
System should be opened up for everyone to download, use, interpret, and
include in another OS. For example, if Mac OS X could run Windows
programs natively, it would be a dramatic improvement for the computer
industry as a whole because it would provide some serious competition for
Microsoft. If you look back to the beginning of the computer industry,
IBM was very slow to improve its original 8086 and 80286 computers until
competition (in the form of Compaq clones) came along. The same thing
happened with Intel, which rested on its laurels until AMD released a chip
(the Athlon) that was faster and cheaper than their Pentium 3.

Competition is good for the industry. Please don't allow Microsoft to get away with this sort of bribery.

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